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ABSTRACT

Responding to the need for improved vocational counseling services, the National Advisory Council has made specific recommendations to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. Recommendations include: (1) work experience for vocational counselors, (2) the infusion of individuals with rich backgrounds in business, industry, and labor into the counseling system, and (3) the requirement of an introductory course in career education for prospective counselors. (JS)

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6th REPORT

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National Advisory Council on Vocational Education

Counseling and Guidance: A Call For Change

June 1, 1972

VT 015 605

Vocational Education Amendments of 1968
Public Law 90-576

National Advisory Council on Vocational Education

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education was created by the Congress through the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. It is composed of 21 persons, appointed by the President from diverse backgrounds in labor, management and education. It is charged by law to advise the Commissioner of Education concerning the operation of vocational education programs, make recommendations concerning such programs, and make annual reports to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare for transmittal to Congress.

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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LAWRENCE DAVENPORT
Chairman

CALVIN DELLEFIELD
Executive Director

June 1, 1972

Honorable Elliot Richardson
Secretary
Department of Health, Education
and Welfare
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education is pleased to submit as its Sixth Report recommendations for improvement of counseling and guidance services.

The Council has discovered that the general quality of counseling and guidance services today is greatly in need of improvement. The counseling and guidance profession is not keeping up with the latest developments in our educational system.

Little attention is given by counselors to vocational and technical education, and the expanding variety of new career opportunities which do not require a four-year college degree.

Counseling and guidance is a useful tool for providing young people with the information and advice they need to make intelligent career choices in today's modern society. If the information offered is restrictive and out-of-date, however, the guidance role could do more harm than good. We are interested in seeing the necessary improvements made in counseling and guidance to make it a truly beneficial and constructive part of our educational and social service system.

We share the concerns of 46 of the State Advisory Councils on Vocational Education which have also studied and reported on the need for improving counseling and guidance services.

This report is the result of numerous hearings and meetings conducted during the course of the past year by the Council's Committee on Counseling and Guidance, headed by Delfino Valdez. The Council appreciates the cooperation of the many individuals and organizations representing business, industry, labor, education, and the general public, whose testimony provided the background for this report.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Davenport

Lawrence Davenport
Chairman

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SIXTH REPORT

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE
A CALL FOR CHANGE

The prime legacy being left to today's youth is the certainty of uncertainty. The major thing youth knows for sure is that change is coming -- and at an increasingly rapid rate. Change in the nature of occupations, in skill levels required for job entry, and changes in work values. They are being told that their prime goal must be one of adaptability -- of being able and ready to change with change. We have assured them that, on the average, they may expect to change occupations somewhere between five and seven times during their working life.

Society has told youth they should want to work and should endorse the work ethic. But the work values of young people in this post-industrial society are not, and should not be, the same as their parents. Youth understands that we have now moved into an era where this Country produces more services than goods -- that increasingly, machines produce products, and man provides services. But how is a young person to plan his future so as to provide the greatest possible service to his fellowman while deriving personal satisfaction for himself?

Most youth understand full well that education is a key ingredient in preparation for employment. We have passed on to youth the false societal myth that a college degree is the best and surest route to occupational success -- and then cautioned them that less than 20% of all occupations existing in this decade will require a college degree. Youth has been told that many more should enter vocational education, but has never been provided with the hard facts that would give them a reasoned basis for choosing to do so.

Given this "adulterated" view of the future and its prospects, coupled with the true complexity of society, is it any wonder that:

---Over 750,000 youths drop out of high school each year?

---Over 850,000 drop out of college each year?

---Fewer than 1 in every 4 high school students is enrolled in vocational education?

---Record numbers of high school graduates are enrolling in college during the very time when unemployment among college graduates is at a ten-year high?

---The ratio of youth to adult unemployment has risen each year since 1960?

---Student unrest is a strong and pervasive force among both high school and college students?

---Over 75% of all community college students are enrolled in the liberal arts transfer program while less than 25% ever attain a baccalaureate degree?

---38% of all Vietnam Veterans are enrolled in vocational programs, while 60% are enrolled in 4-year college programs, in spite of the limited prospects of jobs for college graduates?

Youth who are unsure about the future are bound, to some extent, to be unsure about themselves. The American cry for "freedom of choice" carries a very hollow ring for those whose choices have never been made clear.

THE CURRENT STATE OF COUNSELING

Sixty-four years ago there were no counselors. Today there are more than 70,000.* The counselor-pupil ratio in the public schools was cut in half between 1958 and 1968. It has declined only a little since then. Professional standards have been raised across the board. There is a growing abundance of better research-based counseling tools. The number of colleges and universities training counselors has doubled in the last 15 years. Nineteen federal education and manpower programs enacted since 1960 have called for counseling and guidance services. On the surface, counseling and guidance seems to shine.

When we look beneath the surface, the status of counseling, in practice, looks shaky and shabby. The following observations summarize some concerns of the Council:

---Counselors and counseling are being subjected to criticism by other educators, parents, students, and industry, and there is validity in this criticism.

---Some national authorities have recommended elimination of elementary school counselors.

*47,000 are school counselors. Student-counselor ratios: Secondary school level, 475:1; Elementary school level, 3,500:1 or 6,300:1 outside Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA).

---Numerous school boards have reassigned counselors to full-time teaching duties as "economy" measures.

---The Veterans Administration has removed the "request for counseling" question from their Application for Educational Benefits form.

---Adult and community counseling agencies are still nonexistent in most parts of the country.

---Employment Service and vocational rehabilitation counselors are evaluated in terms of numbers of cases closed rather than quality of service provided.

---Counselors are much more competent in guiding persons towards college attendance than towards vocational education.

---Job placement and follow-up services are not now being routinely provided as an important part of counseling and guidance programs.

---There is a need for the counselor-counselee ratio to be improved in the poverty pockets of the United States.

---In almost no setting is the counselor-counselee ratio low enough to justify strict one-to-one counseling, but counselors still persist in their attempts to use this technique, rather than group counseling approaches, as their primary method of helping people solve their problems.

---Most counselors know very little about the world of work outside of education.

---Counseling and guidance services are being rejected by the hard core disadvantaged as irrelevant and ineffective.

This negative picture is intolerable. A society with an increasing rate of change creates problems for its members, and must accept responsibility for helping individuals solve their problems.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Those who work as practitioners in any field are, and should be, held accountable for both its successes and its failures. There is no doubt that a portion of the responsibility must be placed on counselors themselves. However, there are others who must share the responsibility for providing sound counseling systems for the various publics to be served. Counselors have been more victims than villains, in this sorry scenario. Who else is responsible? The answers, we think, are many:

---School administrators who assign counselors clerical and administrative chores rather than leaving them free to do their professional work.

---Parents who pressure counselors to help students gain college admittance and criticize counselors who try to help students study opportunities in vocational education.

---State departments of education for not making paid work experience a requirement for counselor certification.

---Counselor education institutions which make only one course in occupational guidance required in the graduate programs of counselor preparation.

---The United States Congress which has called for counseling and guidance in 19 laws, but in no law now on the books has provided specific funds to support it.

---The business and industry community for criticizing counselors rather than mounting forward-looking programs designed to upgrade counselor knowledge regarding the world of work.

---Administrators of vocational education for being unwilling to use as much as 4% of their financial resources in support of counseling and guidance services.

---The many agencies of government which employ counselors, for failing to unify requirements for counselors.

---Professional guidance associations which have not effectively made their voices heard among the decision-makers in our society.

---Manpower experts for not collecting and disseminating accurate data to counselors regarding earnings of graduates from occupational education programs.

---Organized labor for being neglectful in establishing a closer relationship with education in general and guidance in particular.

---The individual counselor whose apparent concerns for those he seeks to serve have not been great enough to cause the counselor himself to cry out in protest and to struggle for improvement.

In sort, there are few among us who can be said to be completely free of blame. Recognizing this, we call upon all to join together in a total effort to improve the quality and quantity of counseling and guidance services to all individuals -- youth and adults -- throughout the land.

WHAT MUST BE DONE?

We see no magical solutions, but some reforms are obvious and urgent.

We urge and recommend that:

---State Departments of Education require work experience outside of education for all school counselors who work with students and prospective students of vocational education.

---Individuals with rich backgrounds of experience in business, industry, and labor, but with no teaching experience, be infused into the counseling system.

---Counselor education institutions require at least one introductory course in Career Education and at least one practicum devoted to an on-site study of the business-industry-labor community.

---Responsible decision-makers embark on an immediate major campaign designed to upgrade the vocational knowledge and career guidance skills of currently employed counselors.

---Decision-makers in education make extensive provision for the training and employment of a wide variety of paraprofessional personnel to work in guidance under supervision of professionally qualified counselors.

---Concerted efforts, including computerized guidance systems, be made to get more accurate, timely data to counselors regarding vocational and technical training and job opportunities.

---Increased efforts be made to improve sound counseling and guidance services to members of minority populations and other disadvantaged persons.

---Special efforts be made to mount and maintain effective counseling and guidance programs for handicapped persons, for adults, for correctional institution inmates, and for veterans.

---Community service counseling programs be established and operated throughout the United States.

---Immediate efforts be made to lower the counselor-pupil ratio in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary educational institutions to a point where all who need counseling and guidance services will, in fact, receive them, while simultaneously encouraging more guidance in groups.

---Job placement and follow-up services be considered major parts of counseling and guidance programs.

---Career development programs be considered a major component in Career Education, both in legislation and in operating systems.

---The United States Office of Education create a Bureau of Pupil Personnel Services that includes a strong and viable Counseling and Guidance Branch.

---The United States Congress create categorical funding for counseling and guidance in all legislation calling for these services.

---State Departments of Education and local school boards initiate actions confirming their commitment to the importance of providing sound counseling and guidance services to all individuals.

---All those who now criticize counselors be charged with responsibility for making positive suggestions for their improved performance.

Our glory, as a nation, has been the multiplication and re-multiplication of choice, but it will become our shame if we fail to help our people cope with choice. Counseling and guidance is imperfect, but it is our best device. It deserves the support and backing of our entire society. It has the support and backing of this Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence Davenport

Lawrence Davenport, Chairman

Mrs. Louis Bachman	William Gellman	Thomas Pauken
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Calvin Dellefield,
Executive Director

June 1, 1972

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OTHER PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL:

- First Report - directed its comments and recommendations at the need for change in national attitudes towards vocational education

- Second Report- recommended that the Federal government make necessary policy changes in its approaches to funding, in the organization and role of the Office of Education, and in present and proposed manpower policies and legislation

- Third Report - challenged American education to deal with the needs of the disadvantaged and minorities who do not enjoy adequate educational opportunities

- Fourth Report- turned its attention to five unique problems of financing and planning vocational education programs

- Fifth Report - attacked the educational establishment for paying lip service only to career education concepts rather than implementing realistic programs

- Special Report- Employment Problems of the Vietnam Veteran, urged new efforts to meet the training and employment needs of returning veterans

- Proceedings of Joint Meetings with the State Advisory Councils on Vocational Education.

  Cooperative Day of Planning I (no longer in print)

  Cooperative Day of Planning II (May 1-2, 1970 - Washington, D.C.)

  Cooperative Day of Planning III (November 6-7, 1970 - Washington, D.C.)

  Cooperative Day of Planning IV (April 17-18, 1971 - San Antonio, Texas)

  Cooperative Day of Planning V (November 12-13, 1971 - Washington, D.C.)

  Cooperative Day of Planning VI (May 5-6, 1972 - Denver, Colorado)

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